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ABSTRACT

The history of rural education in northwestern Wyoming and the accompanying bibliography of unpublished manuscripts, periodicals, school records, and oral histories comprise part of an eight-state research effort, Country School Legacy, to study the role rural schools have played in the history of the frontier and to locate and preserve information related to country schools. The report addresses six aspects of rural education: country schools as community centers, country schools as historical sites, country schools and the Americanization of ethnic groups, the country school curriculum (reading, writing, and arithmetic), teachers (their roles, rules, and restrictions), and the country school today. Because northwestern Wyoming was settled in the early part of the twentieth century primarily by people who were second or third generation Americans, naturalization of immigrants took place in the home, influenced by the children and the home visits of teachers. Although the early schools had many shortcomings, individuals today attest that the curriculum was as good as the teacher and the student, and that teachers managed to pass on a love of learning which was more important than the subject itself. (NEC)

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COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY:

Humanities on the Frontier

NORTHWESTERN WYOMING'S COUNTRY SCHOOLS

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Powell, Wyoming

March 1, 1981

Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities

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COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY: HUMANITIES ON THE FRONTIER

The Mountain Plains Library Association is pleased to be involved in this project documenting the country school experience. Funding of this project from the National Endowment for the Humanities, cost sharing and other contributions enabled us all to work with the several state-based Humanities Committees as well as many other state and local libraries, agencies and interested citizens. We are deeply impressed not only by the enthusiasm for this work by all concerned but by the wealth of experience brought to bear in focusing attention on—and recapturing—this important part of history, and how we got here. This project seems to identify many of the roots and "character formation" of our social, political and economic institutions in the West.

Already the main Project objective seems to be met, stimulating library usage and increasing circulation of historical and humanities materials in this region. Public interest is rising in regional, state and local history. Oral history programs are increasing with greater public participation. The study of genealogy—and the search for this information—is causing much interest in consulting—and preserving—historical materials. What has been started here will not end with this project. The immediate results will tour the entire region and be available for any who wish the program, film, and exhibit. There will be more discussion of—and action on—the issues involving the humanities and public policies, past and present. The Mountain Plains Library Association is proud to be a partner in this work, the Country School Legacy, and its contribution to understanding humanities on the frontier.

Joseph J. Anderson
Nevada State Librarian
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COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY

FINAL REPORT

SUBMITTED BY

ROBERT J. BARTHELL

MARCH 1, 1981

COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY CENTERS

The country school is a result of the mass education efforts begun by the great nationalistic movements during the 19th century. Part of the task of that mass education was to produce citizens who had basic skills suitable for an industrial society, make students aware of their nationality through language and geography studies, and introduce some element of hygiene through the school system. Good health being a necessity for a strong government and strong army.

Given the above tasks, it is not out of place to discuss the country school as a community center. The sparse population of the prairie and mountain states, and the weak presence of a federal government in the form of public buildings, it is natural that the country school would be utilized as a community center. Since education was required by law, the construction of the buildings was of necessity a community project.[1] Therefore a sense of the school building "belonging" to the community was

established. A strong sense of the practical which runs through the American lifestyle also demanded that a building not sit idle when it can be used for other things. The central location of the school within the district, necessary to keep travel distance equal for students, tended to make the school a logical site as a voting center, town hall, church, and social center. A cursory glance at the Park County school records for several schools indicates that the constant shifting of school district boundaries was an attempt to keep up with shifting centers of population.[2] Most schools were built so students would not have to walk over four miles to attend.[3] The shifting population often resulted from the simple introduction of a new crop such as sugar beets that required Russian and German immigrants for labor: a population that would be reflected in the community dances held at the schools where the dances would include waltzes, two steps, schottishes, polkas, and square dancing.[4] The schools were also the center of card parties which were a pleasurable means of getting people together, even if they were not on the best of terms, and the proceeds from the entertainment would be used to buy new books and equipment for the school. A method of school financing that seemed preferable to the raising of taxes which would stay on the books forever.[5]

Often only weather or something like the great flu epidemic of 1918-19 could stop a Christmas program or a Friday visiting by parents.[6] The practical approach to financing would take such forms as a Halloween Auction which would sell such things as vegetables, pies, cakes, and even furniture.[7] Teachers would often join in "surprise parties" which would involve meeting at

the school and then proceeding to a neighboring ranch or farm where the family was treated to a surprise party by people starved for some sort of community gathering. The socialization would often take place on closing day when simple games and competitions would take place after graduation, often of a single student, and a picnic would follow the more formal school exercises.

Records of "kidnapping" Santa Claus and release time for early dances and festivals run through many school district records.[8] The most pleasant break for young sixteen to twenty year old teachers were the dances which lasted all night and the young schoolmarm found herself hurrying back to her boarding house to change clothes so she could attend church on Sunday morning.[9] Entertainment starved communities often asked in their contracts "What can you do for our community?" A question which one young teacher responded to by mentioning her musical accomplishments. She was then asked to play for Saturday night dances at the local pool hall.[10]

Prior to World War One, most Wyoming communities had a heavy ratio of male to female population, and dancing with the local married women and the local schoolmarm were the only contact with women that many lonesome cowboys and bachelor homesteaders had. In those early days, however, many drifters were about and were often the cause of violence at dances. Disturbances such as these were handled with equal violence and there are cases where men were killed for creating trouble at social affairs. Bea Baker's account of the beating to death of such a troublemaker at a dance near Meeteetse is a sample. A "bad"

character had attended a dance and started a fight and he was quickly killed by the men in the community. A rough and tumble form of etiquette was essential in a country where a single sheriff was the only law enforcement agent in the entire county.[11]

The community also felt that the school teacher should socialize and were quick to take offense at any attempts to stand off from the parents of the children she taught.[12] The county school superintendents encouraged anything that might tie the parents to the school since this would reduce hostility to education and make the parents see the school as something other than a place which robbed the farm or ranch of an extra laborer.[13] These were face to face, primary relationships that are still carried on in modern one room schools where the students dislike the more impersonal relationships symbolized by activities such as football games and dances at the larger high schools where parents are excluded from the activities and given spectator status. My observations at the Kelly school outside of Jackson, Wyoming are an example of the older tradition being kept alive. I visited the school during a Halloween festival which was being held during the middle of the month because one of the student's parents did not believe in Halloween because of their religious convictions. They did, however, approve of their children attending a school function. All of the concessions at the festival, ring toss, fortune telling, cake walk, were run by the parents and the parents participated in the games as well. Grandparents were in attendance as well as younger members of the community whose children also attended the school. The power of the school to draw together diverse age groups and suburban families who

sent their children to country schools as an experiment testifies to its ability to make something central in a small community that is constantly distracted by travel and television.[14]

The introduction of Santa Claus into the American culture permitted a kind of non-religious/religious ceremony that could fit into the school community. This was undoubtedly the one program which was attended by adults in the community and which was the most closely watched as an indicator of the teacher's ability to cope with limited resources. In the history of the Mountain View School compiled by Margaret Dempster, she comments on the community participation in school programs.

> There were many gatherings at the schoolhouse during the years. At Christmas and at the end of the year there were programs, parties, and dinners. The favorite gatherings were dances. Mrs. Bates played the organ or piano, Mrs. Boermer played a mouth harp, and Mrs. Stall sang and kept time for dancing. They called this group the Pumpkin Center Orchestra. Sometimes Pete and Byron Stall had to work the bellows by hand to keep the music going on the organ. Sometimes the Borners moved their piano over on a sled for extra music.[15]

Some of the programs were also used as a learning device, to acquaint backward, provincial youngsters with the outside world. The Mountain View School would also have "a birthday program for all the February birthdays of famous people."[16]

That the community gatherings were well attended speak to their value in an isolated community. The enthusiasm which people entered into the program was evidenced often by the damage done to the building or other signs of audience approval. Pete King remembers the gasoline lanterns going out during a dance because the dust raised by the enthusiastic dancers clogged the air vents in the lanterns. The dancers were forced to take

breaks to allow the dust to settle and the lanterns to flare up brightly again.[17] Vera Saban's recollections of the school on Upper Beaver Creek near Greybull, Wyoming were typical for many Wyoming teachers.

> "In Upper Beaver Creek, as in other districts, the schoolhouse served as a voting precinct and for occasional social gatherings. There were the customary Christmas programs. In November of my first year we had a program and a 'carnival'--quite an ambitious project on my part, but we did have the fortune telling lady, the fish pond, etc. And a dance with music by a fiddler from Shell. We had to charge a bit for the dance to pay the fiddler five dollars.
>
> I remember attending dances at the Lower Beaver Creek schoolhouse, riding with an escort down the creek several miles. Once we even rode twelve miles to Shell town to a dance--I believe it was an election dance in 1926. During my second term at Beaver Creek the people of the community, with a yen for some entertainment, had a series of 'surprise parties'--unexpectedly converging on some ranch home. Furniture was pushed aside, somebody played a fiddle or an organ, or even just a harmonica, and all danced, chiefly square dances, until nearly morning. Of course, getting to these parties was by means of horses on a wagon or a sleigh, or horseback since the roads were not passable for cars. Children were loaded into the conveyance and taken along, and put to sleep when they tired, at the dance." (Shades of the Virginian!)[18]

The distance to various ranches was uneven for the people who participated in the various forms of the "surprise party" and the school still remained the one central location within reach of all the people in the district. It is not surprising that young, mostly teenage, teachers would be active organizers of such community gatherings. True!

What is remarkable about these community affairs is their endurance during an age of mass entertainment such as movies and Television. The Lucerne school north of Thermopolis still presents Christmas programs that vary little in content and presentation from that of fifty years ago.[19] It is something that is continuous in a changing world, even though the heavy

demands of high school programs in consolidated schools are appreciated for what they do to children, there is a loss of participation on the part of the parent. Parents realize the value of learning socialization outside of the community, but they wonder if the loss of community is worth it.[20]

Most of the early school houses were rather crude log affairs that were decorated only for community programs, and the children looked forward to these as something different and beautiful. In an age before the prayer in school controversy, there were incidents of religious beliefs creeping too far into the programs and sometimes teachers were dismissed because of it. America is a nation of immigrants of varying religious beliefs. The communities themselves were the sole arbiters of what was or was not permissible. Usually the awkward situations were the result of a teacher who had "gone overboard on religion" and were stopped short by the community.[21] Prayers to open and close programs were allowed, but secular views dominated and CHRISTMAS [redacted] programs and Thanksgiving plays were carefully laundered to meet community standards. It is evident that much of the community program has been taken over by organized sports, which remain the only shared school ritual in the larger consolidated schools.

Graduation was also a community affair, even though the ceremony involved only one child. County superintendents such as May Shoemaker and Nellie Hodgson spoke of trying to always make the graduation ceremonies if it were humanly possible.[22] This was an occasion which honored scholarship, school attendance, and community effort. The award certificates were signed

by the county superintendent and presented by them, if possible.[23] Unlike the present condition which allows for ease of transportation, families stayed the day which was capped off with a picnic. It would hardly be worthwhile to travel many miles for a single hour of ceremony. It was expected that the teacher would organize the graduation ceremony and the picnic.[24] Before the advent of student evaluation by testing, the teacher often dug into her own pocketbook to come up with mementos of the occasion. Pictures of the teacher inserted into small pamphlets or booklets were a memento for the student and were often adorned with standardized engravings of patriotic or religious themes and poetry that emphasized good citizenship and a love of education.[25] In the interviews conducted for this project, it is of interest to note the number of students and teachers who refer to "my" school and the references to "the" high school they attended. Community ownership and control was not a misty ideal but a factual matter that was felt deeply and not taken lightly. The community programs represented an attitude about education that was democratic and practical. It was the "specialist" in education, as in other areas of American life, who removed the sense of community from the school.[26]

FOOTNOTES

[1] Beaver Creek School Records 1908-1915.

[2] Upper Sage Creek School Records.

[3] Beaver Creek School Records.

[4] Margaret Ashley Dempster, professional autobiography, undated.

[5] Beaver Creek School Records.

[6] Margaret Ashley Dempster, professional autobiography, undated.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Hyatteville School Records 1901-1944.

[9] Alberta E. Seaman, "Stanley School, Big Piney District, 1926-27," unpublished history, undated.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Bea Baker, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[12] This seemed to be an unofficial part of the teacher's duties in most communities. The teachers made an attempt to get around the community and to use these visits to learn something about their students' background.

[13] Nellie G. Hodgson, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[14] Robert J. Barthell, personal observations made at the Kelly School, October 24, 1980.

[15] Margaret A. Dempster, "Mountain View School From 1911-1945," unpublished history, undated.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Peter King, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[18] Vera Saban, "Wyoming Rural Schools in the 20's and 30's," unpublished history, undated.

[19] Lily Brewster, interview/discussion, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

FOOTNOTES

(Cont.)

[20] Mara Nations, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[21] William Roy Anderson, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[22] The presence of a district administrator at these ceremonies meant a great deal to the parents and students. They speak of the superintendent's presence at programs as one way of measuring the effectiveness of the school. It was also a source of pride to parents that their children would be performing in front of a school dignitary.

[23] Nellie G. Hodgson.

[24] May D. Shoemaker, "Teaching in Pioneer Schools of Wyoming," unpublished professional autobiography, cover letter dated May 15, 1963.

[25] Charlotte Louisa Monk Mayer, taped interview, Cowley, Wyoming, December 20, 1980.

[26] Mara Nations.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS AS HISTORICAL SITES

This aspect of the report is perhaps the most difficult to finish because of the work needed for identification and properly checking out the facts presented by volunteer workers. There is a stone school house approximately seven miles east of Greybull which should be given some consideration as a historical site. It is deteriorating and at present is up for sale. Origins of the building are difficult to track down and a future interview with May Shoemaker, a former county superintendent, should give more leads on the origin of the building. It is very well built and is on a state highway leading out of the Big Horn Mountains that is heavily traveled by tourists during the summer months. The last classes were held in the building in 1950. It is the best candidate for preservation in this part of the state outside of the Wapiti school west of Cody which is still in operation. However, cracks in the masonry may further destroy the building's

structural strength unless something is done within the near future. The present real estate agency which is handling the building has rebuilt the foundation to keep the walls from collapsing.

Both Park County and Hot Springs County have well drawn maps of the various locations of the country schools. The maps go back to the early 1900's. Nellie Hodgson's husband made a number of the maps of the schools in Hot Springs and distributed them to the schools in her districts at her own expense. A framed copy of the maps was sent to all the schools and one of the maps is preserved at the Cultural Center in Thermopolis. Mrs. Hodgson does not know what happened to the other maps that were in the other schools.[1] The Cultural Center has also reconstructed a country school in the basement of the center and furnished it with donated items. This is an excellent display and one which should receive some kind of recognition.[2]

I have also received a map of all the schools which existed in Park County and have a photocopy of the map which will be turned in with this material to the archive center.[3] A complication with these maps lies in the fact that the schools changed names often and locations. School names reflected the families who attended them. If a family moved away, and a family moved in with a large number of children, the school would be referred to by the land it stood on or the family that had the most children in attendance.[4]

There is also the problem of shifting sites. These schools were seen as temporary, functional buildings during the early years. The rise of the standard schools whose recognition depended on following state guidelines forced schools after the

1920's to become more permanent fixtures because the school had to have certain sanitation requirements and lighting needs. The physical building had to change, and in doing so it became more fixed.[5]

Many of the early schools were family schools that were conducted in tents or slab log structures. Also many ranch families used the ranch house itself as a school site. These early schools were often destroyed or the buildings moved and used for ranch out buildings. I have not been able to determine if there were later guidelines from the state in regard to architectural design. Many schools were designed by local people who copied the form of schools they had attended in the East or Middle West.

Several schools have been described and offered as sites by people in various counties. The descriptions are on the historic site forms that are on file with this report. The Emblem school in Big Horn County is still on its original location. Prior to World War One, the school was called the Germania school because the town and community was settled by Germans.[6] However, anti-German feelings during the war caused the town to change the name. The school contained all its furnishings and books until 1980 when a sale was held and these were sold off. The school house is in excellent condition. The reporter on this school indicates that the school records are still at the school house. Many names of families and former teachers are available and the school itself was designed by local people. There is an article on the school in the January 25, 1979 edition of the Greybull Standard.[7] There is some useful information in the article. The school was built in 1913.

There is a school in Teton county which was built in 1895 and was the first school house built in Jackson Hole. It is under School District Number 37 of Uinta County. The school is located five miles southwest of Jackson, Wyoming and is still on the original location. The Jackson volunteer who researched this school indicated that there are names of former students and teachers available. The school site is presently owned by Adeline Neilson, but no name or address is given.

The Basin Gardens school which was located four miles south of Basin was used until the spring of 1918 and was built by members of the community. The school site is owned by Basin School District Number Seventeen and the exact location of the school records are unknown. The building was used as a school, community hall, and a place for meetings for the local Farm Bureau. It was also used as a home for several years.

It should be noted that it is difficult to find any historical sites in northeast Wyoming because most of the early Indian Wars and cattle/homesteader conflicts took place in the southern part of the state. There was a lot of fur trading activities and the discovery of Yellowstone Park, but this predated the arrival of settlers and their need for schools. Most of the settlements in the northern part of the state had to await the construction of irrigation systems that would permit the farming of the land. Consequently most of the school houses were built around 1910.

The Valley School located forty miles south of Cody is still in good condition and contains its classroom furnishings. The school is of wood construction and has a log two room

teacherage attached. Valley school is in good condition and is located in Valley School District Number 27. It is used for community meetings and is an election center for the district. There are no records reported for the school, but Park County School District Number 6 has jurisdiction on the building and additional research could turn up the missing records.

The old Evergreen school has been reported by Peter King who is one of the present owners of the building. The school is located north of Thermopolis and was built around 1914. It was built by the community members who used sawed log construction. A picture of the school is available. The King family also attended the school and the school records are stored in Cheyenne. Mr. King also indicated that old photographs of the building are still available. During its usage as a school the inside walls were lined with muslin and the ceiling was covered with sheet tin. The roof is of an older type no longer found in this region: rough lumber covered with about six inches of dirt. At one time the school had a coal shed, stable, and cistern. Although the structure is still in good condition, the windows have been boarded up and the building is now used as a granary. The school has always been known as the Evergreen school, but Mr. King is unsure of where the name originated.[8]

West of Thermopolis about eighteen miles is a school with the colorful name of the "Padlock" school which I understand was the name of the community at one time. What historical events produced that name is not known. The school and the community are now on what is known as the Arapahoe Ranch. The school was built in 1916 and was originally under District Number 7 but is

now under District Number 1. The school was in use for thirty eight years, a respectable length of time, and is still standing. Its architectural features include a substantial stairway and covered porch at the front entrance. The school has been reported as being intact with nothing removed from the inside. Records for the school are in the State Archives. There are names of teachers and former students available. Children in that community are now bussed to the small school at Hamilton Dome which is the closest school in operation in that area. Information on the school can also be found under the Arapahoe Ranch as a reference.

The most interesting school in terms of this project is the Delfelder school which was located five miles northeast of Riverton in Fremont County. It was named for Jacob Delfelder who owned the school site. The site was not donated. The school was apparently built from a design in a plan book, and the person reporting the school site indicated they once saw the plan. I intend to pursue this because the plan book would provide some objective evidence which would relate to school design in the state. The school was built in 1920 and used for nine years. It is currently owned by the Riverton Valley Grange who have assumed responsibility for the care of the building.[9]

In conclusion, I would have to say that the area of the project concerned with schools as historical sites will be the slowest to research, but the one which will ultimately bring in the most valuable historical information. At this writing I do not have the final report on the Kelly School outside of Jackson which is a fine example of a modern, successful country

school. Kelly school survived long enough to find a new role in a society that appears to be decentralizing because of energy problems and a dissatisfaction with large schools in general. There are many people still living who can provide information on these school sites and who are quite willing to do so. However, the physical buildings have always been torn down or reused, simply because in a state where trees are a scarcity, the building can be used for construction material of other buildings.

There are rather detailed maps available, references are constantly being made to them, but their final location is difficult to determine. Most records of the county superintendents were turned over to the state in the 1950's when that office was abolished and they should still be on file somewhere. However, finding them will be difficult, but the research will pay off. I have encountered several people who have kept board records and school records: the Hyatteville and Beaver Creek schools are examples of that, and I know that more of them are around. This will take years of searching to locate them all.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Nellie G. Hodgson, interview held at Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[2] Hot Springs County Museum, Thermopolis, Wyoming 82443.

[3] Park County Chapter of the Wyoming State Historical Society, c/o F. T. Hayden, Box 787, Cody, Wyoming, 82414.

[4] James H. Moore, interview and discussion held at Central Wyoming College, Riverton, Wyoming, February 14, 1981.

[5] "Early Wyoming Schools: Hot Springs County," Wyoming Public School Boards Bulletin, vol. XV, (May-June 1971) no. 2, p. 6.

[6] May D. Shoemaker, unpublished professional autobiography, cover letter dated May 15, 1963.

[7] "Emblem School," Greybull Standard, January 25, 1979.

[8] Peter King, taped interview held at Hot Springs County Library, February 2, 1981.

[9] James H. Moore, information on historic site form filled out for Country School Legacy. Site form on file with tapes.

COUNTRY SCHOOLS AND THE AMERICANIZATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS

The northern counties of the state had little foreign settlement in the way of close knit ethnic groups who came to the area in groups such as you might find in the Dakotas where whole communities were settled by Norwegian or German immigrants. This portion of the state was settled in the early part of the twentieth century and most of the people who came here were second or third generation Americans. The exceptions are the coal mining towns like Gebo which were a mixture of older, foreign speaking parents with Americanized children. A community like Emblem, originally called Germania, would also be one of those exceptions.

An examination of school records give some indication, however, that some immigrants were in the area for brief periods of time and then either moved on or Americanized their names. The records for the Hyatteville school in the 1920's show many French, Greek, and German names, but there are no indications

in the records that students had problems with their studies or that the teacher's duties included any special concern for students with language problems. Teachers made many insightful comments in these records and would probably have noted any problems relating to language on their pass comments when the students were recommended for promotion.[1]

There are indications, however, of isolated cases, but generally the students picked up some bad speech habits at home, but the teacher corrected them in school much as she would any bad English. An example of this would be May Shoemaker's experience in Emblem.

> This was a German community so I had to compete with a German school conducted by the Lutheran minister, Reverend Germeroth, in the local school building. Often the children had difficulty with certain English words, but as a whole they were a very fine group of children.
>
> I recall an incident brought about by confusing the two languages, I think. At the time I thought it very amusing, so did the children. It was during oral spelling class. I pronounced the word 'sky' to Chris Mayland. He quickly spelled it, 'skee-y' as if it were two letters. Everybody laughed. I hope I was kind and thoughtful enough to explain to him that the English alphabet had no letter, 'skee.' Chris was about 8 years of age then and he seldom heard any language spoken other than German in his home.[2]

As I mentioned in the other section of this report, Emblem was originally called Germania and changed the name of the town and the school during World War One when anti-German feeling ran rather high in the area.

Some problems were reported at the Mountain View School in 1919-20 when Russian and German immigrants entered the area to harvest sugar beets. The problems lasted only a few years and took on the form of fights and quarrels with German students

because of residual feelings left from the war. These families moved on in a few years to the sugar beet fields of Colorado and Idaho.[3]

There are isolated cases of such as those at the Sage Creek School where two girls spoke Swedish among themselves, but this was more of a source of wonder and irritation for the other students rather than a learning problem for the teacher.[4] The experience of Alberta Seaman at the Keystone School in Albany County in 1928-29 was also with Swedes and she indicated that there were problems, but that the school helped in the naturalization process for parents.

> My next school was in Albany County at the Keystone School with two pupils. One boy had come from Sweden about one month before school started. We had problems. The school was a bunkhouse at a tie camp. I sent to home for school supplies which my mother collected for me.
>
> I also had night school at the camp for 6 men who were learning to read and write English so they could take their tests for naturalization in Laramie in the spring.[5]

I am sure this occurred elsewhere, but the great waves of immigrants were over for Wyoming, and I think the experience of this state would be different than in other areas of the country. However, towns like Rock Springs and Rawlins would tend to present language problems because of the ethnic mixture of the laborers brought in by the railroad and mining companies in those towns.

An interview with Hank Cabre who grew up in Gebo, a mining town with strong ethnic groups, indicated that the children were Americanized, but the parents were not. Cabre couldn't recall any difficulties with teachers over language problems.[6] Students did live a different culture at home and the county superintendents

often felt that more education of parents went on in school than education of children. Nellie Hodgson felt that courses in hygiene and nutrition probably educated parents in American customs, but she had no evidence to show this happened.[7] This would seem to be true and should not be overlooked as an extremely important influence on immigrants. The heavy emphasis on citizenship and studies of government were not taken lightly by the schools as evidenced by their beginning the day with a pledge to the flag and the display of Washington and Lincoln pictures in the room. The schools job, or at least an important part of it, was to make good citizens and former students still retain a strong sense of patriotism.

Most of the immigrants came here to be Americanized because that was the way to success, and they were more interested in improving their lot in life than in retaining customs that might interfere with that success. These were not the subdued Basques attending a Spanish school and being forced fed a hated culture. Parents had every intention that their children would be American citizens and would have a better life than they had. Most of the fathers of children in the mining camps saw school as a way out of that kind of life, even though mining was a well paid job. The hard work and constant accidents did not make it something a foreigner would wish on his children if there were other ways out of it.[8]

Both Indian and Mexican communities exist in Wyoming, but accounts differ as to the problem presented. Milt Riske has probably examined that in detail better than I have. He mentions the separate schools for Mexicans which seemed to be a matter of

choice, but all the people interviewed who went to school with Indians and Mexicans claim that there were no problems with language during the instructional periods of school. Schools on the reservation, such as the one attended by Ann Hinckley, were compulsory for Indian children but they seemed to integrate well. "Going back to the blanket" after schooling was common, but attendance in school didn't seem to be effected.[9] Perhaps this problem arose, like many others, when these groups moved into the larger, more impersonal settings of the larger public schools. Interviews with more Indian children who attended these schools would be more revealing as to their attitudes about the language and cultural problems in learning.

I could discover no attempts to segregate schooling for Mexicans in the counties I covered, but there were many signs of discrimination present for many years. However, the problem with language usually arose over transient students who have never been a concern of most school districts who tend to care for their own people more. Something which has been overcome in recent years by special government schooling and bilingual programs.

I think that the most influence with naturalization of immigrants probably took place in the home where the children began to impress upon the parents their accomplishments and the parents responded by applauding those things that quickly brought their children into the mainstream of American life. The simple emphasis on hygiene and the home visits with families was a learning process that many county superintendents innovated and

used with great effectiveness in changing the lifestyle of foreigners. If there were specific persons to credit, I would tend to look to the country school teacher who had a home economics course or two and who passed her learning on to the parents of her students through the students themselves.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Hyatteville School Records, 1901-1944.

[2] May D. Shoemaker, "Teaching in Pioneer Schools of Wyoming," unpublished professional autobiography, cover letter dated May 15, 1963.

[3] Margaret A. Dempster, "Mountain View School From 1911-1945," unpublished history, undated.

[4] Margaret A. Dempster, "The Upper Sage Creek School From 1906-1946," unpublished history, undated.

[5] Alberta E. Seaman, "Stanley School, Big Piney District, 1926-27," unpublished history, undated.

[6] Hank Cabre, taped interview, Powell, Wyoming, January 15, 1981.

[7] Nellie G. Hodgson, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[8] Hank Cabre.

[9] Ann Hinckley, taped interview, Powell, Wyoming, January 10, 1981.

READING, WRITING, 'RITHMETIC: THE COUNTRY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the country school is essentially a study in standardization. This trend towards standardization followed a national need for trained adults who were competent in the basic academic disciplines, and a national tendency to standardize the product when it is produced in mass quantities. It is also a commentary on the need to give a rather mobile population some skills that have transferability to other areas of the country.

Little attention has been given to the role of the record book publishers in the shaping of American education, and I think their influence was two way: they responded to the needs of fledgling school systems, and those systems conformed to the labor saving record keeping put out by the publishers. One of the early records examined was published in 1894 in Fremont, Nebraska, a case of the publisher moving West from Chicago, and

it was aimed at schools in general with no specific state regulations in mind. A notation in the front of the book said that the author, D. V. Stephens, was the author "of various records, and a system of records and reports for County Teacher's Associations." Another publication copyrighted in 1891 boasted as author a man named Emerson E. White, A.M., LL.D. an "author of White's Series of Arithmetics, White's Elements of Pedagogy, White's School Records, etc."[1] The series are briefly outlined at the back of the book and indicate that they had universal application and did not have to observe outlines given by the various states.

A later edition of White's record book carries the promotional blurb that it is "Equally adapted to graded and non graded schools and conforming to the school laws of the several states."[2] This implies a tightening up of the state curriculum with specific guidelines for the teacher to follow. These simple record books brought order and conformity through record keeping and permitted young, inexperienced teachers, administrators, and board members to keep accurate records and follow a state approved course of study. They also eliminated the copy clerk since they boast that there is no "need to keep rewriting names."[3] A 1911 edition of the "Welch System" of recording states that it is a Wyoming Edition, evidence that special state demands were now being placed upon the publisher.[4] The chaos resulting from badly educated students being channeled into standardized curricula makes many of the notations show evidence of a transition period. Notes to the teacher in front of the book ask that both oral and textbook work be graded which hints

at the lack of textbooks in some schools. The heavy role that a "system" is going to play in education comes with the warning that new teachers should not make changes.

> New teachers should not make radical changes in the organization of a school until they have become familiar with the school and then not without good reason.[5]

The increased emphasis on professionalism is shown with a warning that "It seems superfluous to say that no true teachers will, by word or action, disparage the work of his predecessor."[6]

A mixture of methods for assessing the student and his ability to handle advanced work in another grade are present. Social promotion is indicated for one student because he might become bored if left behind: a problem which has not left us as yet. Places for written comment on student shortcomings are informative (e.g. lack of glasses) and the teacher states she could not follow the course of study so she is giving her assessment of each student rather than the books or months of school they have completed. Again this would seem to show that texts and days allowed for school are as yet not fixed. A rather amusing Calvinistic comment by one teacher to her successor is that "one should never give perfect marks in deportment." A commentary, perhaps, on the imperfectability of man.[7] HA!

In actuality these record books are an accurate assessment of the schools if they are filled out correctly. But, printed in their orderly columns are listings of courses which require grades, and since the course offerings appear in a state approved book, it is safe to assume they formed the core of most curricula. The courses are traditional: spelling, reading, numbers, arithmetic, language, grammar, geography, physiology,

history, and civics. One interesting course appears in 1912. There is grade space for instruction of music and the humane treatment of animals. The notation by the teacher says that the humane treatment course should be used to start off the day. Another entry in 1914 notes that a writing assignment should be on "All Dumb Animals and How to Treat Them."[8] This is a course that would arise in a farming community and conceivably could be the result of social groups such as the SPCA which brought pressure to bear on state legislatures.

Other interesting figures are contained in entries that ask for number of feet of blackboard, months of school taught, condition of the school, volumes in the library, and the number of visits by board members and county superintendent.[9]

Up to the 1920's entries show a wide variety of textbooks used and an incredible range of backgrounds in the students. Books studied by students are listed by title, so the replacement teacher the following year can make necessary adjustments to other texts. The 1920's also show that a student can be passed by the teacher's approval or by taking a test.[10] Apparently the test was an option, or the teacher used it as a dodge when it came to the responsibility for the promotion. Later entries show that although the school has a standard text, it has now been changed and it is a warning to the new teacher to be aware of differences in the texts. Although the books are in subject areas, the authors and editors names are given. Standardized tests for regular classroom work with the texts also appeared in a "scale" for grading showing a measurement against some sort of state or national norm.[11]

Student activities such as Christmas parties are noted in entries like "Presented a circus in the hall," Oct. 25, 1934" and "Presented a kidnapping of Santa in the hall, Dec. 21, 1934."[12] School closures were carefully noted and the entries for funerals in the mid 1930's also show us that the mortality rate among children was still present: "Closed school March 5th, funeral of Ace Mercer," and "Closed school at 2 p.m. March 21--funeral of Jack Titus."[13] Besides the notations for teachers institutes, the weather accounted for most of the closures. This is needed because of the new dependency on the motorized school bus: "School closed because of rain, Oct. 3rd, bus arrived 10:50 a.m."[14] The villain is already in the picture, the bus that would later provide the low cost transportation to consolidated schools also brought the improved roads that were the constant complaint of the walking student and teacher. Rain was the school closer more often than snow.[15]

Board records also give insight into the simplicities and complexities of running a rural school. They are valuable records in that they include a warrant register, an enumeration (census) report, and the annual report to the county superintendent. Records for the Beaver Creek school near Shell show a contract for school fuel wood as one of the first items of business. The wood was supplied at two dollars per rick (4 ft by 8 ft by 20").[16] Unlike many schools where the young scholars froze their hands and feet because the green cottonwood couldn't be cut up by the teacher, the Beaver Creek students had a long history of good fuel supplies. Books were ordered from the American Book Company in Chicago and the furniture came from the

farmer's friend, Sears Roebuck. Total school cost for the year 1909-10 came to $395.50, of which $330 went to pay the teacher.[17]

The enumeration reports tell us much about the scholars and the problems they presented to the teaching methods employed. A census was taken of all people from age six to twenty-one years of age in the district. The high turnover of students indicated mobility: bad crops and meat prices forced farm closures and the students moved on. Almost half of the students between 1909 and 1920 were born out of state.[18]

It should be remembered that the teachers were young, and taught basically the courses they themselves had just completed in high school. Prior to 1918, high school wasn't needed to qualify, only a passing grade on the state examination.[19] Most of the teachers and students interviewed for this study felt there were very few problems with discipline. Most of them attribute that to strong discipline in the home, but the class often contained students fifteen and eighteen who hadn't attended school at all and who had to begin with the primary readers along with the five year olds. This condition was fairly common up to World War One.[20] Many parents moved out of their old homesteads closer to school when they realized the hardship they were putting their children through. Some teachers followed very strict board schedules for school, while others were more relaxed.

> The hours in which school was in session each day were very rigid then--it was sacrosanct that the bell rang at nine, children had a fifteen minute recess at 10:30, and a lunch hour from 12 to one. There was another recess at 2:30, and school was dismissed at 4:00. It was unheard of and unthinkable to alter that schedule in any way.[21]

Although discipline problems were rare, the dunce cap was still used to advantage for older children and raps on the knuckles were not uncommon. There are instances of rebellion against a teacher who employed what was considered unfair punishment, but generally speaking the teachers used a friendly approach.[22] Most former students remember their teachers with great fondness and felt that they were very hard working and dedicated people who did a great deal for the school and its students. One punishment reserved for students was the denial of recess, but sometimes even that backfired.

> My youngest student hit me in the face and knocked my glasses off--I kept her in at recess. The next day she hit me again and I kept her in. I asked her why she hit me and her answer, "Because I like you and want to stay in with you." So when she hit me again--I sent her out for recess.[23]

Recess was a time for both the student and teacher to enjoy themselves. The games were the common games passed on from one generation of children to another. Games like crack the whip, pom, pom, pullaway (which went under various spellings), Fox and geese, steal the chicken, and Annie Over seem to have been played at all schools. Regular school play equipment arrived only in the 1920's when the installation of playground equipment became one of the requirements for the "Wyoming Standard" rating of the school.[24] One thing most fondly remembered by the students was the fact that students of all ages played them. With the studies in educational psychology introduced by Dewey, the subject matter taught was divided into age levels, and the games followed when the specialized PE teacher appeared in the larger consolidated schools. There are many accounts of pets like gophers, mice, prairie dogs, goats,

and lambs that populated the school yard, and stories of pets that met unwanted bad endings.

> I remember one such incident which was brought about by a dog that insisted on following me to school every day. He was a good sheep dog named Leo, owned by Mr. Capman mentioned earlier in this paper. No matter if he were tied up or shut up in a shed, somehow he managed, before the day was over, to slip away to school. At first I allowed the boys to scold him or even take a stick to him in an attempt to send him home. But the devoted Leo would only look at me with lovelorn eyes and take the abuse. So, I put a stop to the beating. He was not bothering anyone but would just lie quietly on the floor near me and sleep. However, this could not last. One morning one of the boys handed me a note and I saw that he was beaming with satisfaction. (He was one who wanted to continue beating Leo). The note was signed by all the mothers of the district except for Mrs. Capman, the lady with whom I boarded, and whose husband owned the dog. The note read: 'Dear Miss Schenck, we don't like to have our children raised with dogs. Get rid of this one and save having more trouble.' Then the signatures. I took the note home for the Capmans to read, because it was their dog. Without a word, Mr. Capman took his gun and went out and shot Leo. Mrs. Capmen and I both ran to my bedroom and covered our ears. But Leo was dead! He paid the supreme sacrifice because of his devotion to me. We shed a few tears but never did let the 'nosey' women or children know what had become of Leo.[25]

School work was shared by young and old students. Students were called to the recitation bench while the others worked on assignments. Few students remember homework, and this was the result of their heavy work commitment at home. Most students put in a full round of chores before they left for school, had a long walk to school and back, and did a number of chores before going to bed. Many homes had poor lighting, sometimes only a single lamp, and the teachers often dreaded the loss of books. The limited number of books in some schools couldn't be trusted to students who might ruin them in bad weather or have a younger brother or sister tear out pages.[26]

Poorly constructed schools also prevented good learning habits. Bea Baker recalls three month school years in Meeteetse in 1903 in a school house made of logs and slab lumber that allowed snow to blow in the chinks in the logs and cover the students desks and slates. The students huddled around the stove and cried with the cold.[27] Some counties, such as Sweetwater and Albany, provided free books and supplies. Other schools, like the one taught by Mrs. Close of Clark were the orphans of a poor district. Mrs. Close's school was a crude affair located in a tie camp. The workers had insisted that the company provide a school for their children. The school district didn't wish to take on the burden and consequently failed to provide materials and books in the hopes that the school would close. Although this was not the stated reason, she felt that their actions could only be interpreted in that way.[28]

The people who attended country schools seem to feel that they had a good education, but that it wouldn't suffice today. They felt that they had good training in the "basics" and used their schooling all their life. Many found the eighth grade education good enough for the life they chose, and others who went on to high school and college felt that they weren't handicapped by their country school background.[29] Drawing wasn't quite an art class, but the children enjoyed it and the pictures brightened up the log walls of many poor district school houses. Textbooks were often the leftovers of the larger schools or an outdated edition of a text currently being used in town, but the students seem to feel that the teacher's concern for them more than made up for the inadequate textbooks.

Most students regretted the lack of musical training and felt that that was the one advantage the larger schools had over the country school. One sang or enjoyed instrumental music, usually a piano or organ, only if the teacher had the training, which was seldom. Music was a daily "starter" in most schools and this was followed by arithmetic. It was thought by most teachers that the math was a hard subject and one that could best be handled in the morning when the students were alert.[30] Social studies such as geography and health were done before lunch and the afternoon given over to language. Spell downs were reserved for the end of the day and many teachers saved the last hour for reading exercises which the children seemed to enjoy. Students also felt that teachers in country schools instilled in them a love for that elusive thing we call "culture." Teachers brought in pictures and photographs of famous paintings and recordings of famous singers and musicians. Most of the music students were exposed to were of vaudeville or popular origin such as "Seeing Nellie Home," "Home on the Range," and other such songs. But some listened to phonographs, often bought with the teacher's money, or heard music programs over the radio during the 1930's and 1940's.[31]

Noon lunches were often cold sandwiches in the early days, but a pooled soup or stew was gotten up during the winter. Each student would be asked to bring a different item for the pot and the water would be put on the stove to boil. Generally it would be done by noon and the teacher and students would enjoy a hot meal. However, in some schools the students ate cold sandwiches and fruit that had frozen on the way to school and didn't thaw out in the unheated cloakroom.

Prior to the standardized multiple choice and true/false tests of the late 1920's, most students had rather heavy training in writing.[32] All of the tests were narrative type and the teachers were strong advocates of grammar drills. Expression in language was considered important and the better papers were put up on the walls for other students to admire or envy according to their tastes. The early schools had slates for writing exercises and many slates were "accidentally" wiped clean by a coat sleeve when the student turned it in for correction. He could escape for another day, and might have the exercise done correctly by then.[33]

Country school students maintain that the learning that took place was due to the informality of the instructional process. The teacher was approachable, and willing to help. She knew the student's capabilities and geared the material toward them. The older students acted as tutors in the learning process and the younger students were surrounded by the learning of the older students.[34] The older students' work was the same material they would be covering the next year, and if they eavesdropped, they were learning. Learning was a communal affair and many students remember discussing advanced assignments with their older brothers and sisters on the long walk home from school at night.[35]

The state curriculum was helpful and the new teacher was thoroughly grounded in later years in its content and in the preparation of class outlines. Teachers felt that with so many levels of students working at one time, they had to be prepared for the day's lessons.[36] Teachers often found useful tips and methods at the teachers institutes. In later years, with the

appearance of the college trained specialist, the institutes lost much of their value, but the older teachers felt that they helped a great deal.[37] It was important to follow the guidelines because the students had to take the state, or more properly county, test. A significant number of failures on the test was a rating system for the teacher and the board members were quick to notice any poor showing on their students' test results.

Teachers who have taught in both rural and town schools find that much time is taken away from the classroom by activities, whereas in the country school they spent all their time on subject matter, in town the students had activities such as band and gym which took time.[38] Since the state exam was made up from questions turned in by the country school teachers themselves, both students and teachers felt it was a fair test of their schooling.[39]

School was an enjoyable experience for most country school students who found it to be a pleasant substitute for heavy farm work and a chance to meet other children their age. There were cases of students playing truant, but these were rare and more of a test of the teacher's temperament. Education was looked upon as a privilege and as an escape from a lifestyle that did not appeal to many young people. The homesteaders were of mixed social backgrounds, some of them very well educated, but they all shared a common concern about educating their children. The strong sense of community, fostered by learning with people you had known all your life, was an asset and it was disturbing to country school students who had to learn under other conditions when they attended larger schools.

> None of my rural teachers ever abused or ridiculed a child nor showed favoritism, all of which I witnessed while attending town school in later years. If they didn't love us all, at least we believed they did. When I was in junior high, there was one teacher who seemed to take a fiendish delight in singling out the so-called 'dumb' kids and setting them up for ridicule. He and several others of that ilk were handy with rulers to rap knuckles or 'bean' someone with an eraser. One time he became so infuriated over an incorrect answer that he threw an inkwell at a boy. People like that were in the wrong profession, as far as I'm concerned.[40]

The curious incidentals of learning that took place had many forms. Mary Riley of Cody remembers attending the Moore Hill School in Crook County.

> Across the road from the schoolhouse was Moore Hill Cemetery. On several occasions when an interment took place, school was dismissed and the students attended the 'burying.' We mingled with the family and friends of the deceased and wept, even though we had not been acquainted with the dead person.[41]

In a contemporary world where classes in death and dying have to be taught in school, we can only hope for a teaching situation as flexible as the one Mrs. Riley went through.

Learning seems to have taken place in the kind of environment most educators only theorize about today: one of trust and confidence. The students were eager to learn, and the teachers felt they had something to give the student. One wonders, as do most of the people interviewed, if the price of good training for a specialized job wasn't traded off for some rather good training as a person. The one comment that runs through all the interviews, written materials, letters, and feature stories on country schools is that the students felt they were in a sort of "family" that was very close to them and that they remembered their classmates years later. The teacher was also included in that "family" and the remarks by Mary Riley are typical of the

feelings most students had about their teachers twenty to sixty years later.

> The teacher that term was Miss Mamie Beerline who boarded with a nearby ranch family. She was a kind and understanding young woman and well liked by the children.[42]

The students felt that whatever they lacked in equipment, supplies, and books was made up for by a dedicated teacher. This is something that the education profession ought to examine more closely today, because this is also a major complaint about the modern schools: "The teachers just seem interested in the paycheck."[43]

Sharing was a part of school due to a shortage of books and desks. Most remember two to a desk and many times two to a book. However, in looking back, most of the students felt that the learning process was shared and they learned more, more quickly, under those conditions than if they had been studying alone. This sense of community, however, was also referred to as a drawback in contemporary society because students could no longer stay on the farm or in the community to make a living and a university degree seems almost essential for any work or profession today.

When the age and background of the average country school teacher is taken into consideration, it is remarkable that they left such an impression on their students. Often very limited in subjects, they worked hard with the students and approached the more difficult problems with the idea: "Let's you and I work this one out together." The parents and board members kept close watch on the teaching process through their children, which also aided in keeping up standards. Former students can recall

incidents where parents felt that their children weren't learning what they should be learning and they could check their progress against the state course of study.[44]

Learning was also a game, or at least the teacher tried to make it such. Spelling bees, cipher downs, reading competitions were used to stimulate interest as well as get children accustomed to some sort of competition. The annual plays and programs were also a form of learning. The teacher could make careful assessments of the student needs and could act on them in any way she felt would be effective. Myra Connel remembers a young girl who was bashful about reading a part in the Christmas program. The girl's family all said that she couldn't do the part and the teacher should overlook her. The teacher assigned the girl a part and went ahead with the program despite complaints by the parents. The girl performed in the program and overcame her shyness, and it was due to a teacher who risked parental wrath to accomplish something for a student in her care.[45]

The curriculum was sound, according to former students and teachers, and could be grasped by the average student. The classes that caused the most trouble were those that reflected on home training and family standards: courses such as hygiene. Illness was a serious matter and many children wore bags of asafetida on strings around their necks to ward off illness.[46] The long walks to school often involved wading streams and creeks in the winter and the resulting illnesses from such exposure were taken as a matter of course. Bea Baker remembers her sister not having glasses and her school work failed accordingly. It seems like a simple matter today, but decisions about glasses were made

by parents and not by doctors. When her sister did get glasses, she tried to stay up that night and catch up on the school work she had missed for the past several years.[47] Generally cases such as this were the result of hard decisions that had to be made about money, and glasses didn't get the priority they might have today.

Most of the students would be considered poor by today's standards, but as many of them said, "We were all poor, but since everyone was the same, we didn't know any different."[48] The student could seldom afford to buy many items and supplies in some of the poorer school districts, and the teacher's ingenuity was taxed time and again to make up for the shortcomings. It is noticeable that none of the people interviewed mentioned "rich" kids or felt inferior in any way to their classmates. The depression years were especially bad for many. Mrs. Close recalls a classmate whose parents had lost their ranch and the father went down by the river and built a log house with his own hands and the family lived in the house and lived off whatever food they could hunt or find.[49] The children still attended school, however, and the other children didn't think any the less of them because of the way they lived. At that simpler time in life, money and life style had little to do with brains and who you really were.

The dedication of the school to some sort of patriotism was quite evident, although the Pledge of Allegiance was not required, students participated in it willingly. Most schools began the day with some sort of patriotic song or poem and generally had a ceremony attached to raising the flag. It

should be noted that a flag pole was one of the requirements for becoming a "standard" school in Wyoming. The love of country took the form of little souvenir booklets given out at programs. These contained patriotic illustrations and poems which the students treasured.[50] The strong love of country is still evident in these students' lives today. The county superintendents such as Nellie Hodgson made sure that a picture of Washington was displayed in the classroom and that some sort of observation was made of Washington and Lincoln's birthday. Dramatic presentations were worked out on historical events for these occasions and students would give live dramatic presentations of such things as the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.[51] The older students would perform for the younger and whatever parents or visitors that happened to drop in. During the war years of World War One, students even dug trenches in the school yard and played war games.[52] Democracy was taught as a serious business and the right to vote was something not taken lightly.

Shortcomings though these schools may have had, in their curriculum, they tended to pass on a love of learning which was more important than the subject itself. Gwen Woodward still remembers the teacher who gave her a love of reading and history.[53] The teachers inspired many to go on with their studies, and they did. I think this section of the report can be closed with a comment on a student who utilized his early schooling and went on to get more.

> There are many people who received good, basic educations in the country schools which didn't have the advantages of modern-day equipment and teaching aids.

> A cousin was one such person. After completing eighth grade at Goldie Divide School and graduating from Hulett High School, he attended the University of Wyoming on an academic scholarship and received his B.S. and M.A. degrees. He earned a Ph.D. in botany and joined the faculty of Washington State University in 1939, where Ownbey Herbarium was named in his honor in November, 1974.[54]

The curriculum was as good as the teacher and the student, something we tend to overlook today.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Hyatteville School Records, 1901-1944.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] May D. Shoemaker, "Teaching in Pioneer Schools of Wyoming," unpublished history, cover letter dated May 15, 1963.

[20] Alberta E. Seaman, "Country Schools: Washakie County," taped discussion of country schools at a meeting of the Washakie County Historical Society, November 30, 1980.

[21] Vera Saban, "Wyoming Rural Schools in the 20's and 30's," unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[22] May D. Shoemaker.

FOOTNOTES

(Cont.)

[23] Alberta E. Seaman, "Stanley School, Big Piney District, 1926-27," unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[24] Nellie G. Hodgson, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[25] May D. Shoemaker.

[26] The schools varied in this policy, but the poorer districts had to harbor what little libraries they had accumulated. After World War I, the supply of books increased in most schools and the county lending libraries did much to provide extra reading materials. The early schools in the state, however, had to sign out books for students to take home.

[27] Bea Baker, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[28] Georgia Close, taped interview, Clark, Wyoming, December 7, 1980.

[29] Generally speaking, this assessment of the rural education holds true, but starting in the 1940's there is a sense that the organized activities are an essential part of education. Even though most persons interviewed felt the basic disciplines were taught well, they feel that the socialization that takes place in larger schools is as important as the subject matter.

[30] Roger D. Powell, taped interview, Powell, Wyoming, November 28, 1980.

[31] Georgia Close.

[32] Vera Saban, "Wyoming Rural Schools in the 20's and 30's," unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[33] May D. Shoemaker.

[34] Betty M. Bent, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[35] Mark N. Partridge, taped interview, Cowley, Wyoming, December 20, 1980.

[36] Betty M. Bent, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

FOOTNOTES

(Cont.)

[37] Mara Nations, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Betty Bent.

[40] Mary A. Riley, unpublished professional autobiography, October 4, 1980.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Mara Nations.

[44] Ruth Howe Leavitt, taped interview, Greybull, Wyoming, January 22, 1981.

[45] Myra Connell, taped interview, Lander, Wyoming, February 15, 1981.

[46] Joyce I. Lucas, "Jackson's Hole's First School House," unpublished history written for Teton County Historical Society, May, 1977.

[47] Bea Baker.

[48] Georgia Close.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Charlotte Louisa Monk Mayer, taped interview, Cowley, Wyoming, December 20, 1980.

[51] Peter King, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[52] Floyd Ellison, "Basin Gardens Schoolhouse," Basin, Wyoming, unpublished history, undated.

[53] Gwen Woodward, taped interview, Cody, Wyoming, January 9, 1981.

[54] Mary A. Riley, [redacted]

TEACHERS: THEIR ROLES, RULES & RESTRICTIONS

The state of the teaching profession from 1880 to 1950 requires some comment because it influenced many facets of the country school teacher's life and professional activities. States like Wyoming were under pressure to bring up population for statehood and to get some sort of economic base established that would finance the state government once it was approved. The Homestead Act and railroad transportation accelerated the number of people moving into the state for the decades leading up to the late 1920's. Even if there were enough professionally trained teachers available, the small one and two pupil schools could not afford to employ them. The need for a standardized, mass education program presented itself and the state had to work with what it had. There was a concern for quality education, but the realities of meeting that concern precluded centralized schools where well trained professionals could be utilized for large groups of

students, and the remote locations where the families lived were too far from any urban center to take advantage of them if they existed.

The southern part of the state was settled first, due to the location of the transcontinental railroad, and these counties were the leaders in setting up school districts that were fairly well financed and competently run. The alternative for the rest of the state was to build a number of small schools with local money and staff them with young teachers who were trained in basic disciplines and who had a degree of training in methodology. This was a pattern that had been followed in other states in the country and one which lent itself to application in Wyoming.

Early teachers, prior to 1900, needed no normal training. They could get a certificate by passing the state test, but Wyoming did hold to an eighteen year old qualification. The case of May Shoemaker is an example.

> I was barely seventeen when I started to teach. My schooling had been interrupted when my parents moved to Wyoming in the year 1900. I had not completed the seventh grade at the time but I kept trying to increase my knowledge until, at the age of 16, I secured my first teaching certificate by examination in all subjects that I was expected to teach, as was the custom at that time. No one knew or cared about degrees, college credits, or semester hours. But if a person could read and write well and get a grade of 75% or more in the tests, he was supposed to know how to teach school.[1]

Need, however, often cancelled the eighteen year requirement and young girls like May Shoemaker got "their school" without reaching the age limit set by the state.

Most of the settlers tried to copy the educational standards of the states that they had lived in before coming to Wyoming and

were already familiar with the setting up of a country school and what was needed for a child to get by in the world. Professional people such as lawyers and doctors were also land hungry and followed the migration to the West, and, like Lavinia Dobler's parents, donated land for schools and closely supervised the school's operation. The tradition of her family's involvement has continued into the present time: Central Wyoming College now stands on the homestead property her father and mother had "proved up" when they first settled in the state. It should be noted that the same demand for education that prompted the country school also gave strength to the demand for college education in the form of the community college in later years.

The profession at the turn of the century was not the exclusive property of women, but they did tend to dominate the field. It might be more properly called a master craft at that time. Most young girls wanted to be a teacher because their mother had been one and it was a profession that gave a woman a sense of worth and independence. It was also the only professional figure that girls ever saw in small communities: the doctors and lawyers, if they were there, represented professions dominated by men. The early encounters in life with sympathetic, understanding teachers also had a strong influence on the girl's decision to later become a teacher.[2] As has been the traditional pattern, which still exists to some extent today, men stayed in the teaching profession temporarily because there were better paying opportunities in the business world.

Dedication worked as an effective stopgap where professional training was limited and further schooling inaccessible to the

young girl starting out in the field. Prior to 1900, there were few requirements, even from the state. Hopeful establishment of standards by the state legislature grounded on the realities of the state's geography and small population living in small, isolated communities at great distances from another. Bea Baker recalls early teachers who were simply housewives who had some schooling and who took over the instruction of the young in their homes.[3] A little schooling was better than none at all. A sixth or eighth grade education sufficed for the limited curriculum of the country school, and it was understood that higher education could be had elsewhere if finances permitted. Many teachers realized years later that there was more to education than that which they were exposed to in the first eight years, and some felt that they knew everything there was to know about language and math because they had it all in their country school.[4]

In discussing the training of the country school teacher it is essential that some attention be given to the role of the county school superintendent. This public office has been castigated for its failings in the 1950's, but it played a very important role in the formation of education policies and in the establishment of increasingly higher standards in subject matter and methodology. The counties were large, some of them traversed by mountain ranges, rivers, and badlands, and it took a great deal of effort and planning for the county superintendent to cover all the schools. Some of the superintendents made a point of visiting the young, new teachers during their first week of school, a time when they most needed help.[5] Almost all of the teachers interviewed expressed appreciation for their county

superintendent's help and felt that they gave them valuable information on teaching and helped them out of difficult situations. Some of the county superintendents invited teachers into their homes on weekends and fed them, just so the teacher could be relieved of the boredom of their isolation and could return to class refreshed on a Monday morning. Nellie Hodgson even lost money holding down the job because of her care for teachers.[6]

It was the county superintendent who also had to intervene many times in disputes with the local school boards and pressure them into providing more learning materials or fixing up a deteriorating school building. This was an elected post, however, and subject to all the whimsical vagaries of political life. The required teachers institute was as good as the county superintendent who organized it, but the teachers felt these were worthwhile meetings that gave them new insights into their profession as well as practical advice on how to teach subjects that the teacher had a sketchy background in.[7] The dream of the country school teacher was the four year degree at the university, but poverty, needy parents, support for the family often delayed this goal. Many school teachers had to give up the thought of university training because a sick mother demanded her presence at home to care for younger brothers and sisters.[8]

The University of Wyoming offered summer courses where teachers could come in for several weeks, or months, and pick up more hours of study that would give them a higher certificate rating. Many of these certificates are still proud possessions of retired teachers who knew the value of the schooling in terms of personal sacrifice. Courses such as rural sociology helped

the teacher to understand the community they lived in, and professors who taught that course are remembered with gratitude.[9] Newcomers to the state from the more stable communities suffered culture shock at the conditions they had to live and teach in, and an understanding of these conditions made them bearable. The emerging discipline of educational psychology was also invaluable to the young teacher, and many felt they could cope with problem students adequately after taking the course and it also helped them to urge the brighter students on into higher education. The increased emphasis on further training in the 1950's, encouraged by the county superintendents, actually made the superintendent's job obsolete.

> At that time, teachers could have very few college credits or the normal training program. After Velma Linford became State Superintendent each teacher was given a provisional certificate and it would be stated how many credits must be received before another could be given. There had to be a plan submitted to show that the teacher had planned to have the degree by 1962. There were many extension classes being offered and several took classes by correspondence.[10]

The information on Nellie Wales, a former county superintendent in Hot Springs County, contains material that indicates a close relationship between the country school teacher and the superintendent.[11]

Some teachers were called out of their high school normal training sooner than they expected because of a country school teacher's resignation or illness. One even had to finish her high school classes by special arrangement while she taught a rural school.[12] The teachers did feel that the normal training was useful and that in the early schools the teachers institute was a valuable offering of the county superintendent's office.

The actual school building itself often presented problems that influenced the quality and quantity of the students' work. Prior to World War I a "frame" school was a wonder for most teachers because they had to contend with slab log sheds, tents, and some even taught school out of doors. The familiar and accessible ranch bunkhouse was most often used.

> The schoolhouse was a short distance from the family house--in a bunkhouse. Black boards were black enameled walls of the building. Textbooks were old ones from the Hyatteville school.[13]

The teacher at the first Grass Creek School, District No. 5 taught school in a sheepwagon in 1915.[14] Many buildings, and vehicles, were pressed into service around 1906 when the Owl Creek Valley was opened to homestead filings.

> At Lucerne, the stone lodgehall was used for the school building, an old boxcar was taken from its wheels, placed on the ground and some windows inserted, making a warm, comfortable place to hold school. Homemade benches and desks were used and, of course, a stove, a table, and some chairs completed the furnishings. There was not much blackboard area. Slates were used.[15]

The churches, such as the Baptist church at Lucerne, were also used for schools until a new building could be completed.

In the ranch country around Meeteetse, the slab logs used in construction permitted snow to drift inside the building and school was called off until the snow could be removed.[16] Teachers like Georgia Close had to make desks and chairs from old crates and lumber lying about the area because the school district couldn't afford new school furnishings.[17] One teacher, Margaret Dempster, helped a coal mine school keep its district by dropping out of high school to teach for four weeks.

> About the time that I was a senior in high school and really anxious to earn some money I heard that I was eligible to take teacher examinations. So I contacted Miss Nellie Underwood who was County Superintendent of Schools in 1918 and made all the arrangements. I passed and just a few weeks before I was to graduate from high school Nellie Underwood called and wondered if I would be interested in teaching four weeks at the H & O Coal Mine School. They had to have this much school to keep their school district. There were two little boys who wanted to finish the school year. A. A. Slade was superintendent of schools in Cody so I contacted him to find out how I could graduate from high school and at the same time be absent to teach this school. It was arranged and I was to study all lessons and write out the assignments. The school was held in a tent house near the home of the owner of the mine. I stayed with the family Monday through Friday when I would ride home for the weekend.[18]

Even though the schoolhouse itself might be made of rough cut logs, its setting could be one of natural beauty which made up for the crude architecture.

> The setting was very picturesque--a little valley with forested hills all around, Devils Tower to the west, rimrocks to the east and the irrigated pastures and hay fields of the Campstool Ranch to the north. Chokecherries, gooseberries, strawberries, and wild roses grew along the banks of Lytle Creek. Our drinking water came from the clear, cool stream.[19]

Anticipating that many schools would not be in such idyllic settings, the training courses for teachers stressed making the building itself presentable. The first school taught by Florence E. Wogoman was an example.

> Marquette was her first school, a one room rural school fifteen miles west of Cody. It had cross lighting, a coal stove for heating, no electricity and no inside plumbing. Her course in normal training had emphasized the importance of making the schoolroom attractive, so she set about blackening the stove and hanging sash certains at the windows.[20]

In Wyoming, more often than not, the school was a log building, walls covered with muslin or burlap that moved frequently when the mice came inside to explore the interior.[21] HA!

The picture that stays in the public mind of the rural school, and the one that all teachers aspired to, did exist in places such as the Goldie Divide school in 1927.

> The schoolhouse, a small, white, one-room structure, was situated on a bleak, prairie. Although there were trees, rolling hills and gullies some distance away. The building faced the dirt road which ran north to south, and the schoolyard was enclosed by a barb wire fence. At the back of the yard stood the customary two outhouses, located in opposite corners, and a horse shed was to the north. The shed could accomodate four or five saddle horses when the bitter north wind decided to blow. I believe all of the students, as well as the teacher, rode horseback to school.
>
> There was one swing, but no other playground equipment, and nothing like a basketball and hoop or baseballs and bats. At recess and noon, we played our games of tag, run sheep run, hide and seek, et cetera., on the native buffalo grass that covered the yard.[22]

But, more often than not, a young lady like Mazie Rise, in 1903 had a typical setting for that time.

> The building was not complete when it was time for school to begin so we used a little cabin with one window--no desks or chairs and the men put blocks of trees for the youngsters to sit on. I borrowed a board from a lady in town and we began. The oldest boy from the Baldwins was fifteen and had never been to school. But how those children did <u>learn</u>..... Never having been to school they did many amusing things, such as running to the window if a dog barked and contradicting one another, but they finally got used to it. As the parents had known me as a little girl--the children all called me 'Mazie.' When the superintendent came he corrected them for doing that. Mr. Otto Franc bought the furniture when the building was completed--my uncle gave a stove. Drinking water was brought from the river flume half a mile away. They got flour sacks, and the girls and I hem stitched them for sash curtains. The roof was dirt covered, fine, until a heavy rain in the spring--when it leaked and covered four nice new desks with mud.[23]

The children did come to learn, and the teacher's relationship with the students remains for most former country school teachers the most wonderful part of that experience.

Charlotte Mayer still keeps some small booklets given to her by her school teacher and speaks of her country school experience with great warmth and affection. The teacher entered into the life of the children and shared their enthusiasms, but not always with as open a manner as they wished. Pets presented to the teacher, a sign of affection, were accepted, but they could take on a strange form.

> I also let it be known that I was fond of pets, so one boy brought me a prairie dog one day. It made a good pet and I took it back home with me after school was out. It would sleep on my lap or lie by the fire like a dog or cat, until one day it must have heard the 'call of the wild' because it disappeared and was never found again.[24]

Almost all the teachers came to school the same way their students did, often suffering the same problems of fording creeks and rivers, falling off log bridges, and sharing a horse with one or two others.[25] Sometimes part of the board money for the teacher would be reduced if she would escort younger children in the family to school. Sometimes the teacher would have to learn to accept the turnabout joke that a rough people living rough lives thought was amusing.

> Very often the boys ran away from school at recess or lunch time. One afternoon they had climbed nearby trees and refused to come down. I moved a chair outside and spent the afternoon watching 4 boys in the trees. I excused them from 'school' at 4:00 p.m. that day. Apparently, for revenge, one afternoon as my son and I left school, a rifle shot drove me back into the building. Each time I ventured outside, another shot, from the 2nd story bedroom window occupied by the 10th grader. Jack and I remained in school until after dark when I could sneak out. The parents thought it was a big joke on 'teach.'[26]

If the teacher, school students, and families were not related by blood as in the case of Mazie Rise, they felt very strongly a sense of belonging. Roger Powell remembers his

classmates with affection and feels that the country school was a special type of relationship in his life that has never been duplicated.[27] Peter King's experience at the Evergreen school was the same. He felt that going to school with people you have known all your life made for a good learning environment and he felt that that closeness was the first thing lost in school consolidation: parents no longer participated as equals in the school activities and the more professionalized teachers seem now to resent advice or participation from the community.[28] Mara Nations spent many years in country schools and then taught in the larger consolidated schools, and her experience has been that the close relationship between student and teacher is no longer possible. Students now take classes from different teachers because of the emphasis on specialization for the student and the teacher.[29] Even the more technical courses which now require special buildings and teacher training had to be handled with some degree of competence.

> I followed the state course of study and the boys took the required state exams. I had to teach algebra and geometry--subjects I had not utilized since my school days. So I had to do 'homework' every night to be sure I was at least one lesson ahead of the boys. The 10th grader wanted to have 'shop'--so with the aid of the Hyatteville principal and a lumberjack who worked at the Renner saw mill, George had 'shop.'[30]

Myra Connell remembers her school catching on fire because the wind had worked the joints of the stove pipe loose in the attic. Sparks ignited the rafters in the attic and the roof caught fire. A neighbor lady, who was pregnant, and several neighbor children tried to put the fire out with water from the creek. It was winter time and no one could stand on the icy roof, so all that

was left to do was to watch the school burn after the teacher had removed her personal belongings from the building.[32]

Despite great differences in ages and school levels, most of the teachers remember few discipline problems, something they attribute to community pressure and the respect with which their profession was held by the community. None of them could remember problems similar to the ones they later encountered in larger consolidated schools. There were problems, however.

> One boy, Hudson Hunt, was older than I, and a girl, Cora Felter, was almost my age (almost 17). Before many days of school had passed these two fell madly in love, which added to my disciplinary problems. They would go back of the school house or down to the creek where we kept our saddle horses, where he would indulge in a good smoke, while she looked on admiringly. Of course, girls never thought of smoking in those years. Some way or other I discovered what was going on and felt dut--bound to do something about it. One day I walked down to the creek on pretense of feeding Nellie some oats and there they were sitting on a log while the smoke was filling the air around them. Well, I didn't know just what was the proper procedure, but act I must! So I stepped in front of the boy and meekly (I am sure) said, 'Hudson, don't you know we can't have smoking at school?' His answer was to the effect that his parents didn't care, which I was sure was the truth. Somehow I managed to point out that the little boys of the school looked to him as an example and that to see him smoke was a bad influence on them. He was not living up to their ideals and that was not fair to the younger ones. I never did know how I managed to say as much as I did but seemed not to resent what I had said, in fact he seemed rather to like it. It ended that he promised me never to smoke again <u>at school</u>. That was all I expected of him and he kept his promise as far as I know. A few years later I met Hudson at a 'Fourth of July' picnic. He and Cora had long since gone separate ways. He apologized for his aggravating conduct when he was in school and asked me to come have some lemonade (there was no such thing as coke) with him. So all was well with us afterward.[33]

The teachers were remembered for their strictness and understanding, but in farming and ranching country, a teacher's love of animals would always bring back pleasant memories. Eldridge

Robertson remembered his first teacher in 1905.

> Jennie Grosh stands out in my memory because of her love for horses which I shared as a youngster and in growing up years. I remember hearing some of the old timers tell that Miss Grosh had all her horses trained to open their mouths and take medicine from a tablespoon when she thought they were sick.[34]

Robertson felt that the outdoor life preferred by the boys interferred with their schooling.

> Language was added to our subjects, a very unpopular subject with boys, especially learning poetry, when minds strayed to fishing (the streams were abundant), hunting and other outdoor activities. Our drinking water was carried in a bucket from a nearby stream and a dipper was used for drinking. A hand bell was used to call school to order. Our lunches were sandwiches made of homemade bread and elk meat, and milk, carried in a Union Leader tobacco pail with wire handles. The girls wore homemade, long dresses, braided hair and laced or buttoned high-topped shoes. Discipline was an important factor in education at that time.[35]

There were touching moments in these experiences. On one occasion the students went to the river bottom and dug up a small evergreen tree and planted it on the grave of one of their school mates who had died. It is the only evergreen in the cemetery, it lives yet as a memorial to all of them.[36] It was the teacher who also had to contend with fashion problems such as thawing and drying out the hems of the long dresses and petticoats the girls wore which became soiled and damp on the long walk to school.[37]

The students provided humor of an innocent sort. Their provincialism did not include the world at large and they often had difficulty in understanding assignments.

> Sam Lanchbury told this joke on me for years. I had decided to remember all the famous men who were born in February so began with Lincoln's birthday on

> February 11. I asked the children if anyone knew whose birthday it was. Clyde threw his hand up and when I called on him he said, 'It's Johnny Lanchbury's.' Johnny was an older brother of Sam's and well known in the neighborhood. I doubt if any pupil ever remembered that it was Lincoln's birthday.[38]

That provincialism had its reward in that students knew enough to enjoy what they had, even though their age and isolation kept them from the world at large. In an age of cynicism about the teaching profession, few people could write as Margaret Hoglund Coe could about her experiences at the Upper Sage Creek School.

> Sometimes in reminiscing, the ones that are still around think of the Church services held in the old school house; the school programs; the spelldowns with Lower Sage Creek School and Mountain View School; and the picnics, where almost all came back smelling of wild onions and garlic, and a few bunches of wild flowers, a mouse or two to drop in someone's pocket, a smile and a feeling of happiness at being alive on such a beautiful day.[39]

The teacher had to board out in these isolated communities, and sometimes this proved to be a good experience, and sometimes it did not. The salaries for that time were considered good, and teaching was always an attractive profession, even though it might be the only one available to a young girl.

The curriculum taught the students was a simple one that stressed the three R's of tradition. Adding that something extra to make the R's understood taxed ingenuity. Overall the teachers rated the state course of study as a "very good, comprehensive, course of the study."[40] The duties spelled out by the school boards were simple, yet much was expected that one could only learn on the job.

> The course of study worked out at that time, particularly in social studies, had a rotation system in order to cut down on the number of classes. Certain

> sections of history and geography were offered each year, with sixth, seventh, and eighth grades studying the same material. The next year another section was offered and the third still another. By the time a child was through the eighth grade he had covered all areas and passed the exams in all areas. It worked very well, not only cutting down on the class load but adding interest for the pupils--instead of perhaps one or two in a class there might be three to six or more.
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> The fourth and fifth grades had a similar rotation of material. One year of social studies was Wyoming history.
>
> The spelling course of study was very individualized, so each child advanced at his own rate. A seventh grader wasn't laboring to learn to spell 'illumination' and consistently misspelling 'there' on his written papers.
>
> In the twenties formal grammar was in bad favor--it simply wasn't stressed but English usage was. Much oral and written composition was required. The children were taught to write paragraphs and longer essays, and to talk before a group. The teacher could save time, and add interest, by having the entire school take part in such lessons, expecting results commensurate with the grade of the child.[41]

Periodic visits by the county superintendent zeroed in on the teacher's lesson plan book and she was reprimanded if it wasn't properly up to date. In the early homestead days there was no state course of study.

> Wyoming had no courses of study so each teacher used the material brought with her from her native state. There were few home grown teachers in the state and no native born teachers. Few of the district officers kept records or made reports or took the trouble to insist that the teachers prove their certification.[42]

It was a slow development of standardization, but it was what the public and the educators wanted. The teacher was integral to the learning process and the school was truly as good as the teacher in it. A good teacher was appreciated, and could be lured off by higher pay. Fights between districts could erupt over the successful wooing of a good teacher who had been induced to change schools. One such event occurred in 1907 at the Upper Sage Creek School.

> During the second year of school our teacher was a Miss Fezenbeck who was an excellent teacher and knew just how to manage such a group. She was so good that the Superintendent from Cody schools took her into the Cody system in January. The neighborhood was really up in arms over this and managed to withdraw from the Cody District and form their own district along with Lower Sage Creek.43

Often the school curriculum was old stuff to a five year old because he or she had already been to school many times on a visit. Ann Hinckley speaks of this as being commonplace on the Wind River Reservation school, and others speak of it as a part of life which no one thought much of.

> Something that happened quite frequently in those days that, I'm sure, is unheard of today was the sending of little brothers and sisters to school with their older siblings to 'visit' for the day--some children being as young as age three. Could it have been that a tired, work-worn mother wanted to get a little one out from underfoot for awhile?44

But, despite the closeness of family and neighbors, there was a sense of having missed something by not going to town. Bill Anderson thought "town schools had more recreation, games, etc., more general learning."45

Weather played a rather heavy role in Wyoming education. Some schools had summer terms only, prior to 1910, and in some districts the summer session lingered on much longer. Early school sessions in Jackson Hole "were summer terms but by 1900 winter terms were beginning to be held.46 In an age before mass media there was no way of canceling school or of releasing students during an afternoon blizzard because their parents wouldn't know if school was out or not.47 All of the burden of holding school was left to the teacher and not the board. Bad weather combined with family illness did not keep all the young scholars

home, and they attended school under conditions that would be unbelievable to parents today.

> I believe the worst storm I ever witnessed occurred that spring in March of 1906. It began snowing on Friday evening and a blizzard continued for almost a week. For three days only Fred Preis and I got to school at all, and Fred would not arrive until about 10:00 a.m. as he had to do all the feeding alone before he came to school. His foster father, Mr. Preis, was ill at the time and so was unable to give a hand at feeding the stock. Finally the storm broke, spring arrived and school continued until some time in April.[48]

There were many anxious parents who felt understandably concerned when they knew six and seven year old children had to walk home from school in bad weather. The teachers found that sometimes weather and nature got in the way of a new job offer.

> Before leaving Big Piney, I got a job teaching at Kelly from May to August, but the community was destroyed by an avalanche before I could get there. In the meantime, I signed a contract to teach primary grades in Savery.[49]

Learning was encouraged through various prizes and awards. Attendance was rewarded with a star.

> Many of the rural schools participated in Spelling Contests, Math Contests, and track and field day. The County Superintendent was always on hand for 8th grade graduation and awards were given for perfect attendance, and for students who had read 12 books and had memorized 12 poems (the list had to be given the Superintendent by the teacher by a certain date.)[50]

The methods employed in teaching the basic subjects varied considerably but they seem to have worked.

The most important tool was an interest in children and a former student remembers a Mrs. DiVall as an "exceptionally capable rural teacher....she helped many rural students over a rocky road with her individual attention.[51] Nellie Hodgson's memory of her mother's work as a rural teacher in Iowa was

repeated in the dedicated, hardworking people she later superintended in Wyoming.[52] The Christmas program could be used to raise the money necessary for field trips that would enhance the meager course offerings.

> The Christmas program was a big event. The children would sing songs, say poems, and act skits. Then Santa would come and pass out the treats. Any of the money that had been raised for the treats, if left over, would be used for field trips in the spring. Sometimes the teacher and some of the mothers would take them to a matinee on Sat. or Sun. afternoon. Usually the children planned the big day.[53]

Students like Roger Powell recall that the teacher made a game of studies like math and increased the pleasure of learning. He felt that the concern of the teacher helped him to master math, enjoy it, and led to its lifelong employment in his work as a mechanic.[54]

Recitation was the standard means of testing students, but prior to the 1920's there seemed to be a heavy emphasis on writing. This reinforced the language studies, and not all teachers were advocates of the much praised phonics.

> When I began teaching (1925), phonics was in bad repute. We taught our first graders sight reading. Remembering the book that was handed me in the first grade, this seemed great. Every letter of every word in that book was marked for pronunciation, even to the silent letters marked out. It was a terrible maze and you had earned getting into the second grade after wading through that. I'm sure that the return to phonics is good--some of our adults of today who are poor spellers probably owe it to the elimination of phonics when they were children. But, when I taught, I was more than happy to disregard phonics, except for the fundamental letter sounds, word families, etc. My pupils did learn to read so I must have done something right--or they learned in spite of me and not because of me.[55]

The elimination of the narrative and essay exam also led to the decline of language studies, but this became a necessity

under the new emphasis on standardization. They also permitted the student to "cover more territory" and this was seen as an advantage.

> At that time what we called the 'new type' of examinations came into use. I went through high school and never took anything but the essay type of exams. But the examinations taken by my first eighth graders in 1926 were the new type--they merely underlined words, or marked true or false, or had multiple choice, etc. I thought that type of test was wonderful--so much more material could be included in a test, the answers were definitely right or wrong, and they took less time to correct. But when I started using them in my teaching I found that they took longer to develop. But the big loss, I think, was to the children. When the essay type of test was abandoned the children lost the art of writing a concise paragraph.[56]

Methods, however, could fail you when it came to physical things outside of the school over which you had no control. Hank Cabre remembers long coal trains that lumbered by his school house in Gebo. It was a coal mining town and several of the long trains passed within a few feet of the school each day, and when they did, the teacher had to stop whatever recitation or lessons that were in progress.[57] Martha Riniker remembers the distraction of the noise from slates and slate pencils and "how they squeaked" as the students wrote their lessons.[58]

The pay for all the dedication and preparation was considered pretty good by community standards at that time, especially in areas where ready cash was not available and struggling farms and ranches were "land poor" but eager to have the local children educated. The rather complete board minutes of the Beaver Creek School outside of Greybull pretty much reflect the pay received around the state. These pay warrants are as much a study of the fortunes and failures of ranching and farming as

they are a study of the teaching profession. The first teacher hired in 1908 received $55 per month. In the early 1920's the salary stayed around $90 per month and dropped back down to $50 per month during the years of the Great Depression. The 1940's saw the salaries rise to $175 per month and then go to a high of $275 during the 1950's when better trained teachers demanded more money and tended to gravitate towards the new consolidated schools.[59]

Usually a quarter of that salary was spent on room and board at a local ranch or home, but the money was good, except for some districts during the depression when some stores would not accept warrants, and the teachers felt that they were rewarded for their efforts, even though the money might seem paltry by contemporary standards. Teachers like Bea Baker and May Shoemaker used their money to help out at home and even took schools close to home to avoid paying room and board.

> My parents decided by the end of my second term at Cloverly that I should teach nearer home. My small check was a great help in paying taxes and other expenses at home and by living nearer it made payments easier to transact. But most important was the fact that my contract specified a six month's term of school at $50 per month.[60]

These salaries themselves were considered princely when compared to a school teachers mother's pay for similar work in earlier years.

> My mother had told me so many interesting things about her experiences as a pioneer teacher in Nebraska. She had started out after finishing in a country school, probably the eighth grade. She boarded around, furnished some of the books and an organ which she could play, all for the sum of $4 to $6 a month which didn't sound like such a small amount in the 1890's.[61]

Boarding out was necessary as few of the schools had teacherages and there was a need in some communities to keep the money in the community itself.

The conditions for boarding out ranged from comfortable home/family situations to incredibly crude and overcrowded living conditions. Most of the time the young teacher was from the community itself and boarding simply meant staying with relatives or friends who had known the young teacher all their lives.

> It seemed very good when I was given the Eagles Nest School and would receive $70 a month, also that I could board and room with the Sam Lanchbury's who lived at what used to be the half-way station for the Red Lodge/ Meeteetse Stage. The Lanchbury's were old friends of my family.[62]

Some of the boarding families were foreigners and Mara Nations recalled staying with a Norwegian family who spoke very little English and who prepared meals that were mostly potatoes and milk.[63] Teachers were not expected to work for their board, but they did often pitch in to do dishes or help a harried mother out by watching the children. Other teachers slept in a folding bed or in the childrens' bed with the children for company. The married or widowed teacher who moved into isolated communities found help with their own children and many remember those communities with deepest affection. After her children had caught diphtheria during the trip to her new school in Burlington, quarantine for three weeks kept the new teacher and her children in the house. This brought on many problems but the community pitched in to help out.

> During this quarantine I wondered many times whether or not I had acted wisely when I took the job in Burlington. There I was among strangers, with no access to the outside, even to get groceries. However, the good people of the neighborhood saw to it that I was supplied with all necessities of life. While they could not come in, and

> it would have been dangerous for them to do so, they brought fruit, vegetables and meat from their farms and gardens and put great boxes of it on our back porch. I have been grateful to those good Mormon people ever since that time.[64]

The contract signed by the teacher was considered to be pretty sacred, and by contemporary standards they seemed to do a lot to earn their money. Myra Connell recalls receiving a pile of green cottonwood logs that she was supposed to cut up for the school stove since that was part of her job. The school didn't have an ax. This required more attempts to wheedle an ax out of the school board whose members were scattered all over the district.[65] Most of the districts required single or widowed women as teachers, but this rule varied considerably and it often reflected the times. Some teachers who had successfully taught for years while married were told they couldn't teach anymore because they might get pregnant, which was the standard excuse. But the closing up of jobs during the great depression meant that single people could spread the work and paycheck around. But the boom for teachers during the war years of 1941-45 brought the married teacher back after the younger ones left Wyoming for war work on the West Coast.[66] Some teachers resented being called back because they were needed again, but were denied those years of the Depression to practice their profession.

> With job opportunities for girls just out of high school rather limited, and with high schools offering normal training courses, there was a surplus of teachers, with great competition for the available schools. Not all young teachers found a job. And we certainly didn't argue about salaries or about living conditions in the district--we just felt lucky to get a teaching position. Fringe benefits were unheard of. My salary during two years at Upper Beaver was $75 a month. In Powder River

> I received $110 for teaching the four lower grades. During my four years at the Luman School I was paid $90 a month. Of course there was no such thing as annual raises. Those were the depression years.[67]

In pre World War I days, the contract lasted as long as the school district had money. Once the money ran out, after three or four months, school would close and the teacher would be sent home until the district raised enough money to start over again.[68] Janitor work was carried out by the teacher, and sometimes she was paid for it, or she could pay a student to help her. The stove had to be tended and the fire started before the children arrived at the school. Some of the new girls came from homes where they had never started a fire and the intricacies of building fires had to be learned. The Hyatteville school records contain a rather elaborate drawing showing how to operate the school stove. The drawing showed how to fill the humidifier on the stove and open the window to give proper ventilation to the firebox.[69] It is one frustrated artistic teacher's legacy to her professional sisters. Hopefully the gift was appreciated, but the records are silent on the matter. It was usually a long day that started early and ended late.

> I drove out from Cody every day and had to start the fire so planned to be there by 7:30. Most of the children came at 8:30 from quite a distance by school bus so they were cold and needed a warm building. I also cleaned the room after school each night for the first year, but after that the school board agreed to hire a high school boy who lived close by to build fires and clean.[70]

Some teachers found that although they were willing to do things for the community, the school board interpreted civic activities in a light that often produced surprises for the young teacher.

> The teachers' contracts included a question of 'What can I do for the community?' I had been a church organist (piano and organ) for a few years and I answered the question that I could provide instrumental music. Well--the first Saturday I was taken to the local pool hall!!! and was told I was the music for the Saturday night dance. Well, that was a flop. But to keep my teaching job I learned to play a few popular tunes and a new tempo.[71]

The community, students, and board members could keep close watch on the teacher and she had little chance to get outside of her contractual duties.

> Teachers were expected to be at the schoolhouse no later than 8:30. Usually, by necessity, she worked until almost dark and if she didn't carry home a load of books and papers to correct, she was probably very remiss and the school board knew it. Of course, all the janitor work was done by the teacher.[72]

Communities expected the teacher to be a moral example to the students and things like cigarette smoking and that vague term "running around" were sufficient causes for dismissal. The rather close relationship between teacher and community and the fact that these young teachers came from similar backgrounds themselves, made holding the line on the contract possible.

Why did most of them go into teaching, especially in a place like Wyoming? One cannot overlook the enormous success of the popular novel The Virginian and the central figure of the schoolmarm who was a literary figure that a young girl could identify with. Not a few chose the West because of the few women around and the chance to meet eligible bachelors. Probably the the most important reason was that it was probably the only acceptable profession for most women of that time. Some were lured West like Nellie Hodgson's mother with a chance to "Grow up with the West."[73] Many were also interested in filing

on homesteads of their own and be landowners for once in their lives. The West was romantic to the American public, as it continues to be today, and the schoolmarm was part of that popular image. Women had a very strong influence in shaping the Wyoming society, and the bulk of them were or had been school teachers. Education was also one of the few places where a woman could work up to a public office in the department of education. Women like May Shoemaker had built that eventual goal of county superintendent into their career planning at a very early age. In 1906 she was in the process of obtaining her higher certificate.

> The highest certificate obtainable at that time was the 'First Class,' the goal I had aimed at all along. No doubt but it was during this period that the legislature passed the law concerning qualifications of County Superintendents. One requirement for a person seeking that office is that she or he must hold a 'first class certificate.' This law has been the subject of considerable controversy in recent years since, by present standards, it has not yet been determined just what constitutes a 'first class' certificate.[74]

The most impressive thing about the interviews and documents gathered for this report is the sense of accomplishment these early teachers felt. They felt that their schools belonged to them and that their dedication and work was repaid by the community in a kind of respect and adulation that is lacking in the profession today. They are remembered with love and respect for the job they did by their students and community. Nostalgia can dim the harsh aspects of rural school life, but the claims made for it by its former students appear to be sincere. Many wish they could have done things differently, and many more wished they had been better educated themselves. But given the times they had to work in and the tools and material available for the task, they performed well.

FOOTNOTES

[1] May D. Shoemaker, "Teaching in Pioneer Schools of Wyoming," unpublished professional autobiography, cover letter dated May 15, 1963.

[2] Lavinia Dobler, taped interview, Riverton, Wyoming, February 14, 1981.

[3] Bea Baker, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1981.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Alberta E. Seaman, "Country Schools in Washakie County," taped interviews by Washakie County Historical Society, Worland, Wyoming, November, 1980.

[6] Nellie G. Hodgson, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Bea Baker.

[9] Gwen Woodward, taped interview, Cody, Wyoming, January 9, 1981.

[10] Betty M. Enis Bent, unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[11] Nellie Wales, county information, File # M-80-55, Hot Springs County Museum, Thermopolis, Wyoming.

[12] Margaret Ashley Dempster, unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[13] Alberta E. Seaman, "Stanley School, Big Piney District, 1926-27," unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[14] "Early Wyoming Schools: Hot Springs County," Wyoming Public School Boards Bulletin, vol. XV, (May-June 1971) no. 2, p. 6.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Bea Baker, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[17] Georgia Close, taped interview, Clark, Wyoming, December 7, 1980.

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[18] Margaret Ashley Dempster.

[19] Mary A. Riley, unpublished autobiography, October 4, 1980.

[20] Margaret Dempster, Manila Null, "Florence Wogoman," unpublished professional biography, undated.

[21] Vera Saban, "Wyoming Rural Schools in the 20's and 30's," unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[22] Mary A. Riley.

[23] Mazie Kern Rise, letter, June 7, 1967.

[24] May D. Shoemaker.

[25] Bea Baker.

[26] Alberta E. Seaman, "The Renner School, Hyatteville District, Big Horn County, 1934-35," unpublished professional autobiography, undated.

[27] Roger D. Powell, taped interview, Powell, Wyoming, November 28, 1980.

[28] Peter King, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[29] Mara Nations, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[30] Alberta E. Seaman, "The Renner School, Hyatteville District, Big Horn County, 1934-35."

[31] Betty M. Enis Bent.

[32] Myra Connell, taped interview, Lander, Wyoming, February 15, 1981.

[33] May D. Shoemaker.

[34] Joyce I. Lucas, "Jackson's Hole's First School House," unpublished history written for the Teton County Historical Society, May, 1977.

FOOTNOTES

(Cont.)

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Margaret Ashley Dempster.

[39] Margaret Hoglund Coe, "Upper Sage Creek School," unpublished history, undated.

[40] Vera Saban.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Early Wyoming Schools: Hot Springs County," Wyoming Public School Boards Bulletin.

[43] Margaret A. Dempster, "The Upper Sage Creek School, From 1906-1946," unpublished history, undated.

[44] Mary A. Riley.

[45] William Roy Anderson, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[46] Joyce I. Lucas.

[47] May D. Shoemaker.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Alberta E. Seaman.

[50] Betty M. Enis Bent.

[51] Margaret Hoglund Coe.

[52] Nellie G. Hodgson.

[53] Betty M. Enis Bent.

[54] Roger D. Powell.

[55] Vera Saban.

FOOTNOTES

(Cont.)

[56] Ibid.

[57] Hank Cabre, taped interview, Powell, Wyoming, January 15, 1981.

[58] Joyce I. Lucas.

[59] Hyatteville School Records, 1901-1944.

[60] May D. Shoemaker.

[61] Margaret Ashley Dempster.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Mara Nations.

[64] May D. Shoemaker.

[65] Myra Connell.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Vera Saban.

[68] Bea Baker.

[69] Hyatteville School Records.

[70] Margaret Ashley Dempster.

[71] Alberta E. Seaman, "Stanley School, Big Piney District, 1926-27."

[72] Vera Saban.

[73] Nellie G. Hodgson.

[74] May D. Shoemaker

COUNTRY SCHOOLS TODAY

The country school today might be at some sort of crossroad on the way to oblivion. It will still exist in many isolated areas of the state where geography and population density make consolidation impossible or at least impractical. But the very invention that brought about consolidation, the school bus, might also be presented in the near future with a crisis of its own in the form of rising fuel costs which are a major part of any school budget. A renewed emphasis on education on peer tutoring and smaller classes may force education to look over its present methods of instruction and seek a return to the small communal learning that took place in the rural school. More importantly, there seems to be a disenchantment with education as it is carried on in the larger public schools, and taxpayer dissatisfaction with those schools might restore some form of the country school in an urban, neighborhood setting. We can only wait to see how

this works out. But the ones qualified to speak on the country school, people who taught in them and attended them, have mixed feelings about restoring the country school.

The students are, of course, the major concern in education. Although students attending country schools today like the learning environment, they miss the activities at the larger schools and the chance for socialization.[1] But these offerings are the sort of thing that teachers like Betty Bent and Mara Nations, who have taught in both rural and consolidated schools, feel destroy the environment the students like.[2] The rural school cannot compete with the specialized offerings that give students in depth studies and training in any one subject area. Experiments using visiting teachers at rural schools to teach specialized courses like art might offer a solution to the problem. Mary Porter who teaches art at three country schools and uses Jackson as an administrative base is a fine example of a program of this type that is satisfactory to parents and students alike.[3] But the limitations on time and money might make this a problem for some districts.

Students who have moved from urban areas to schools like the Wapiti School west of Cody seem to enjoy school for the first time and want to finish their lower grade education in a country school. But there is the practical problem for the student of finding work and competing for academic openings against students who have had more intense training. They wonder about their ability to keep up, even though this did not present a problem in the past, a society which is based on science and technology needs early training in those disciplines. Those disciplines

require facilities that are not available to most school districts because of their cost. Schools which graduate one or two students would be at a special disadvantage.

Some of the retired teachers interviewed in this report have grandchildren and great-grandchildren in public schools, and though they would like them to have the learning experience of country schools, they would not like their grandchildren to go back to them and give up the wider choice of training the children now enjoy at the larger schools. They all comment on the level of work children now do, but also are critical of the poor grounding in basic language skills and mathematics.[4] They especially appreciate the chance for training in music and feel that this is best done in the consolidated schools.[5] Many of them remember the sketchy exposure to music in their own backgrounds and feel that it is important. This produces a schizophrenic view of education. Mara Nations felt that teachers lose a valuable contact with students that she had in the country schools. This is due to the fact that students must constantly leave her class for music or gym class and they always change teachers.[6] But the skills obtained by the students are recognized as being better than the country school could offer. Other teachers feel a sense of inadequacy when they reflect on their country school teaching. They feel, like Bea Baker, that they taught all they knew, but they realized later that they didn't know very much.[7] The limited horizons and experience of those teenage teachers were sources of uneasiness: did I not give some people enough and they never realized their potential? Or, did

the teacher also feel that way about things in general after a long and full life.

> As I look back I think I should have done more--but I feel that way about everything in my life after 85 years.[8]

The boys remember the sports and games of the rural school yard but felt they would have liked to been able to play against other students. This kind of competitiveness fostered by the society is something to be desired, but it must come at the expense of communal sharing and games which permitted all ages of children to play.[9] It is the activities that are the big draw for the consolidated school and it is doubtful that any sort of substitute can be found for it that would fit the rural school. The actual physical building can be updated and made healthy and attractive, but what goes on in that building depends on the teacher since she is the one who sets the tone for the learning process. This is a major problem, but one which could change. Many young teachers find the rural schools refreshing and enjoy the close relationships they have with students and the community. It helps to give them an identity.[10] But the isolation remains as something to be contended with. Even with the availability of the automobile, one is reluctant to put themselves in a small community with little to offer in the way of intellectual stimulation. The salaries demanded by the specialized teacher is out of the reach of many school districts, and there is some question that the specialized training in the lower grades is actually worth the money.

The older rural school fitted the needs for its time, and this was admitted by the people interviewed, but they feel that

one cannot go back. Technical training is essential in this society, and it must start early. In a corporate society it is also essential that students learn about people and the socialization process.[11] The early farmer or rancher did not need these skills, but his grandchildren do if they are to make a living in the city. Farming and ranching itself has become agribusiness and makes the same technical demands as any other industry. Modern communications have tied the state to world markets, and a rancher in Big Piney must be as aware of the world market conditions as a New York stockbroker.

Ann Hinckley's observations on modern schools are interesting because she has been involved in education at a number of levels in the state for many years. She works with the Wyoming Community College Commission and has a sense of the requirements for education in and outside of Wyoming. She too feels that specialization has perhaps been overdone and that education needs some kind of shakeup, but just how this will come about no one is quite sure.[12] Many areas have been developed in education because of research in teaching methods. But one often questions the need to require a grade school teacher to have large amounts of educational psychology and other courses that seem to not be effective in teaching. If a simple relationship between a teacher and student is enough to get the job done, many former teachers feel, why bother with anything else. After all, it is the end product we are after.

The fight that many schools had to stop consolidation is also a sign that schools have passed out of community, and even board, control. The rise of professionalism in teaching has made

the teacher the arbiter of things in education and the board and community feel that they have no role left in the education of their children, but they have traded off that control for what they call a "better education" for their children.[13] Boards which had to deal with teenage girls with a high school education now find themselves talking to aggressive young professionals who demand certain conditions for employment, and if the vacancy must be filled, the board must give in. The father and mother who had a satisfactory education in a country school cannot understand the teacher who speaks an educational language filled with references that are meaningless to them. Teaching is now a science and requires a degree of expertise that is puzzling to a parent who finds his son working the same math problems he had as a boy and the boy is doing much worse than the father did in school, even though the son's teacher is better trained than his father's.

There is also the side of professionalism that hurts many of the older, retired teachers. Teaching is done for "the paycheck" to a degree that was unthinkable before. There is a general acknowledgment, even among teachers, that the kind of dedication to the work that once existed is now gone.[14] Teachers, like doctors and lawyers, demand money for their services and they don't want anyone to tell them how to perform. The colleges of education used to say that we "teach children, not math or English," and now their own expertise has come back to haunt them. In the early days of colleges of education, they had to fight for their place in the sun amongst established disciplines such as math and language. The education professors expressed

a concern for the student and felt that the student shouldn't be sacrificed for the discipline. Now their own discipline makes demands upon the child that are obstacles to learning. An example of this is the development of reading courses. Courses such as these are based on studies of reading levels of young people at various ages. There is a tendency to let the child read only that which is approved for his level. The country school child read the book that was available and felt no qualms about taking on a book from a higher level in school that was being read by his older brother or sister. These kinds of learning adjustments could be made by a teacher familiar with the student.[15] Testing for reading levels now takes the place of the teacher, and the process becomes more and more complex. The educational course of study is tied to the certification process and cannot be changed without involved legislation. The parents look on helplessly and wonder how such a condition came to pass.

There is no denying the competency of the modern teacher in the consolidated school, but there is some wonder about her commitment to the education of one's child. Transitional teachers such as Mrs. Bent went through the late 1940's and 1950's in rural schools and then transferred to larger consolidated schools. She feels herself a loss of commitment that was easy to make at one time, but which is harder and harder to make each year.[16] The older teachers are glad that the changes in the physical plant of the school are for the better, but they feel that a better job of teaching was done in the older buildings because the teacher and not the physical environment made the difference.[17]

Do country schools still offer a good, basic education? If education is defined as knowledge of a subject, they probably do not. They do offer a good environment for learning, which also promotes an interest in advanced education.

Perhaps the one thing they can offer our society at this time is a chance for learning to take place in small groups under the direction of a person who knows each member of that group and has a good relationship with them. Country schools were a "community" in the best sense of that word. The teacher fit into the school community which included the parents of the children she taught. Is this community enough in these early years? Most parents think so, but there is the world outside and they want their children to have the best chance at succeeding in it.[18] The country school, like the agrarian society envisioned by Thomas Jefferson, has collided with the scientific/technical world and it lost, or at least was seriously set back. Whether this will be a permanent loss no one can tell. Judging from the people interviewed and the documents examined, the country school has much to offer in the way of turning out human beings who can share with one another and enjoy a sense of community. Maybe that is their role today: creating an alternate life style that can produce good human beings. The scientists, technicians, and businessmen will come out of that community, but they can take their training for the outside world at a point in their lives when they have learned what life with their fellow human beings should be.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Mara Nations, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[2] Betty Bent, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[3] Mary Porter, interview, Jackson, Wyoming, October 24, 1980.

[4] It is difficult to tell, at times, if many of these comments are the result of media news reporting. However, those interviewed who had direct observation of children and grandchildren within their immediate families felt this to be true.

[5] Mara Nations.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Bea Baker, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[8] Mazie Kern Rise, letter to "Mrs. House," June 7, 1967.

[9] William Roy Anderson, taped interview, Pioneer Home, Thermopolis, Wyoming, December 29, 1980.

[10] Mary Porter.

[11] Mara Nations.

[12] Ann Hinckley, taped interview, Powell, Wyoming, January 10, 1981.

[13] Peter King, taped interview, Thermopolis, Wyoming, January 31, 1981.

[14] Mara Nations.

[15] Betty Bent.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Mara Nations.

[18] Ann Hinckley.

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